
Social and Economic History of Astoria

Author(s): Alfred A. Cleveland

Source: *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, Jun., 1903, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Jun., 1903), pp. 130-149

Published by: Oregon Historical Society

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20609567>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Oregon Historical Society is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF ASTORIA.

On a peninsula flanked by Young's River and the Columbia, ten miles from the broad Pacific, is situated the historic city of Astoria. Its beginning dates back to April 15, 1811, when an expedition sent from New York by John Jacob Astor founded a fur-trading post on the present site of the city, and erected a stockade and buildings for the use of the traders. For a short time all went well with this little pioneer settlement, and a profitable trade was carried on, despite the murder of the crew of the Astor Company's vessel, *Tonquin*, and the destruction of the vessel off the coast of British Columbia. The Indians became enraged on account of the treatment accorded them by the captain, and set upon and murdered the crew, with the exception of Mr. Lewis, the ship's clerk, who, though mortally wounded, after inducing the Indians to come aboard again, set fire to the magazine and blew up the ship and its swarm of savages.

Soon after this, the second war with Great Britain started, and the members in charge at Fort Astor, thinking they would be captured by the British war vessels then on the coast, and that their goods would be confiscated, sold their interest and that of Mr. Astor to a rival company, known as the Northwest Fur Company, and controlled by British subjects. Soon after this transfer was made the British warship *Raccoon* appeared in the river, and on December 12, 1813, took formal possession of Astoria in the name of Great Britain, and named it Fort George.

In accordance with the terms of the treaty of Ghent there

was to be a mutual restoration of all territory captured during the war. When the question of the restoration of Astoria or Fort George came up England contended that Astoria had been transferred in a commercial transaction between an American and a British company, but this contention was not pressed against the American claim that the settlement of Astoria by an American company confirmed that title already secured by the discovery of the Columbia River by Captain Gray in 1792, and by the exploration of Lewis and Clark in 1805. The United States again took possession of Astoria August 9, 1818, and the formal transfer was made October 6, 1818.

Astoria was now a very small settlement, consisting of a stockade and a few shacks, but bearing the high sounding titles of Astoria and Fort George, the latter being the property of the Northwest Fur Company.

In 1821 the Hudson Bay Company and the Northwest Fur Company were consolidated, and in 1824 Dr. John McLoughlin was placed in charge of Fort George. At this time the fur trade was carried on chiefly with the tribes of the interior, and it was the custom for the agents of the company to carry the goods to the Indians. Under the circumstances Doctor McLoughlin saw that the chief trading post should be farther inland, near the head of navigation, and moved to Vancouver, Washington, leaving a trader in charge of the company's property at Astoria, whose duty it was to watch for the company's vessels, and to send the pilot, Indian George, out to meet them and to pilot them to Vancouver.

With the departure of the fur company, Astoria became a lookout station and a trading post of very little importance. Mofras describes it in 1841 as "a miserable squatter's place, invested by the rival American and English factions, with the pompous name of Fort George and town of Astoria, the fort being represented by a bald

spot, from which the vestige of buildings had long since disappeared, and the town by a cabin and a shed."

This condition was soon to be changed, for the trains of immigrants were beginning to arrive in the Willamette Valley, and some were to push on to the extreme western limit of the continent. In 1843 J. M. Shively came to Astoria and took up a claim in what is now the heart of the city, and known as Shively's Astoria. He was followed by Col. John McClure, who took the claim joining the Shively claim on the west, and now known as McClure's Astoria, and A. E. Wilson, who located on the claim to the east of Shively's claim, and now known as Adair's Astoria. These three men and James Birnie, the trader, in charge of the Hudson Bay Company's station, were the only white men in Astoria in 1844. Soon after this Robert Shortess located on the land now known as Alderbrook, and a Mr. Smith located at what is now known as Smith's Point. Mr. Birnie lived in the company's building, situated near the present site of Saint Mary's Hospital, Colonel McClure lived in a small cabin just to the south and east of where the Baptist Church now stands, and Mr. Shively, "who didn't believe in joint occupancy, which disturbed the social relations between Mr. Birnie and himself," lived at "Lime Kiln Hall," on the ridge near the eastern limit of his claim. Mr. Wilson lived in a cabin in Upper Astoria. There were several settlers on Clatsop Plains at this time, among the number being D. Summers, Mr. Hobson and family, Rev. J. L. Parrish, Messrs. Solomon Smith, Tibbets, Trask, and Perry. Ben Wood, N. Eberman, and other young men held claims on the plains, but lived elsewhere.

Astoria the fur-trading post now ceased to exist; Astoria, the town, was started. Astoria's real beginning, from which resulted a city, dates back, then, only to the early forties when the homeseekers first settled here. In

1846 James Welch and family and David Ingalls arrived. Mr. Welch took possession of the Shively claim during Mr. Shively's absence in the East and divided the claim into city lots as Mr. Shively had previously done. This led to a dispute over the ownership of the claim which was finally settled by an equal division of the claim between the two interested parties.

When J. M. Shively returned from the East in 1847 he brought with him his commission as postmaster and opened the first post office west of the Rocky Mountains in the Shively building, still standing on the east side of Fourteenth Street, between Exchange Street and Franklin Avenue. The next year S. T. McKean, wife, and six children arrived and took up their residence here. In this year also the news of the discovery of gold in California led to a stampede to the mines and while some of the inhabitants of Astoria went, their places were soon filled by people brought here by the great increase in the amount of shipping done from Columbia River. A great demand for lumber and provisions arose and mills were started to supply this demand. Hunt's mill, just below Westport, had commenced operations in 1846, and when the gold excitement started, had one hundred thousand feet of lumber on hand which was eagerly purchased at \$100 per thousand. The Milwaukie mill and Abernethy's mill at Oak Point supplied the greater part of the lumber for the California trade. In 1849 Marland's mill, just above Tongue Point, was started. This mill was later destroyed by fire. In 1851-52 James Welch and others built the first mill in the city proper. It was located in the block bounded by Commercial, Bond, Ninth, and Tenth streets. It was afterward owned by W. W. Parker and known as the Parker mill.

The increase in the amount of shipping led to the establishment of the customhouse at Astoria in 1849. The

same year Captains White and Hustler arrived and brought the first pilot boat to operate on the Columbia-river bar, the *Mary Taylor*. The pilots had their headquarters at Astoria, and this led to increased trade for Astoria and the establishment of boarding houses for the accommodation of the shipping men and the passengers of vessels that stopped here either to await favorable wind to proceed to up-river points or to cross the bar or to complete their cargoes of lumber or increase their cargoes of provisions with a few barrels of salt salmon.

When Col. John Adair, the first collector of customs, arrived at Astoria he occupied the McClure house and tried to secure land from the different owners of the town on which to build the customhouse. The owners refused to donate the land and fixed the price at a figure which Colonel Adair considered too high. The result of this disagreement was the establishing of the United States customhouse at Upper Astoria and the beginning of the rivalry between the upper and lower towns, which lasted for many years, and led to the building up of two towns mutually jealous of each other yet having every interest in common. Judge Strong, who passed through Astoria in 1850, says :

When Astoria was pointed out as we reached the point below, I confess to a feeling of disappointment. Astoria, the oldest and most famous town in Oregon, we had expected to find a larger place. We saw before us a straggling hamlet, consisting of a dozen or so of small houses irregularly planted along the river bank shut in by the dense forest. We became reconciled and indeed somewhat elated in our feelings when we visited the shore and by its enterprising proprietors were shown the beauties of the place. There were avenues and streets, squares and public parks, wharves and warehouses, churches and theaters and an immense population—all upon the map. Astoria at that time was a small place or rather two places—the upper and the lower town—between which there was great rivalry. The upper town was known to the people of lower Astoria as Adairville. The lower town was designated by its rival as “Old Fort George or McClure’s Astoria.” A road between the two places would have weakened the

differences of both, isolation being the protection of either. In the upper town was the customhouse ; in the lower town two companies of United States engineers, under command of Major J. S. Hathaway. There were not, excepting the military and those attached to them and the customhouse officials, to exceed twenty-five men in both towns. At the time of our arrival in the country there was considerable commerce carried on, principally in sailing vessels, between the Columbia River and San Francisco. The exports were chiefly lumber, the imports merchandise.

The United States census of 1850 gives Astoria a population of two hundred and fifty-two, which number included the two companies of United States engineers stationed here and probably a number of transients.

I have before me a photograph of a painting copied from a daguerreotype picture of Astoria taken in 1856. This picture was taken from a spot near where the Parker House now stands and shows a wharf and a dozen houses. The wharf was known as the Parker wharf and extended from the Parker mill in a northeasterly direction to a point just north of the Occident Hotel. This was the first wharf erected in Astoria and was built in the early fifties. The picture also shows the old Methodist Church which was built in 1853-54, a cooper shop, the Shively house, the present residence of Judge F. J. Taylor, and the buildings occupied by the United States troops during their stay here. A few houses were not shown in the picture, those in the then western part of the town and those in upper town.

Astoria was now assuming the proportions of a town and in 1856 was incorporated by the territorial legislature. The town included the Shively claim and a part of the McClure claim.

With the incorporation of the Astoria and Willamette Valley Railroad in 1858 by T. R. Cornelius, W. W. Parker, John Adair and others began Astoria's struggle for rail connections with other parts of the state and with the

East which ended with the completion of the Astoria and Columbia River Railroad in 1898.

No census returns were handed in for Astoria in 1860, but the estimated population was about two hundred and fifty. The troops had been removed before this so that the town had had a substantial growth caused chiefly by the increase in the amount of shipping and the trade with the small growing settlements near Astoria. Astoria was becoming the trade center for all points on the lower Columbia. The fishing industry was confined still to the smoking and salting of salmon and a considerable quantity was shipped to the Sandwich Islands:

J. M. Shively, who had been appointed postmaster in 1847, left for the mines in 1849 leaving his deputy, David Ingalls, in charge of the office, who moved the office to his store on the southwest corner of Tenth and Duane streets. At this time Astoria was the distributing office for the entire Northwest, including the present states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana. In 1853 San Francisco was made the distributing point for the coast. T. P. Powers, who resided in Upper Town and was a part owner in that place, succeeded Mr. Shively as postmaster and moved the post office to upper town near the customhouse. This left Astoria without a federal office and helped to build up its rival. With the change of the national administration in 1861, new officers who were friendly to the lower town were appointed and the post office and the customhouse were moved to the lower town. It was remarked at the time by a resident of lower town that "politics took them away and politics brought them back."

The erection of Fort Stevens and Fort Canby at this time made work plentiful around the mouth of the river and contributed to the growth of Astoria both in popula-

tion and in wealth, as many of the supplies were drawn from the town.

The school census for the years 1859-70 shows a steady growth in population brought about by the establishment of new enterprises, the settlement of the country tributary to the town, and the increase in amount of shipping from the Columbia River, especially the establishment of a regular line of steamers from Portland and Astoria to San Francisco. In 1865 Christian Leinweber started the Upper Astoria tannery which gave employment to about thirty persons. In 1867 what was afterwards known as the Hume mill was built near Thirteenth and Commercial streets and was one of the city's most important resources until its destruction by fire in 1883.

In 1867 Judge Cyrus Olney, who had succeeded to the claim of John McClure, formulated a plan to dispose of a part of this property at a uniform price per lot. This plan was known, locally, as the Olney lottery. Tickets were sold for \$50 each, entitling the holder to a lot in the city and a chance to draw the "grand prize," which consisted of two lots and a house, the property now owned and occupied by Louis Kirchoff and situated on Twelfth Street, between Exchange Street and Franklin Avenue. The other lots were situated in different parts of McClure's Astoria. The plan then amounted to this: each ticket entitled the holder to a lot, though the location was a matter of chance, and a chance to win two lots and a house. Many lots were disposed of by means of this lottery.

By 1870 the population of the town had increased to six hundred and thirty-nine, and the population of Clatsop County had increased from four hundred and sixty-two in 1850 to one thousand two hundred and fifty-five in 1870. Small sailing vessels and steamboats were run-

ning between Astoria and lower river points, and a regular steamer service was maintained between Portland and Astoria and between Portland and San Francisco. At this time it was customary for the ocean steamers to make the trip from Portland to Astoria during the day, and to tie up at Astoria for the night, and to cross the bar the next morning. Steamer day was the event of the week and was a source of considerable revenue to the merchants of the town.

The Pioneer and Historical Society was organized in this city in 1871, and, as the name implies, its membership is limited to the pioneers of Oregon, and its object is to prepare and keep a record of the events in which the pioneers figured during the founding and development of the State. Many records were collected by the society, but for the most part have been scattered and lost, as have the books of its once valuable library. For several years past the society has had merely a nominal existence, but recently a movement has been started to reorganize the society, and to carry out the purposes for which it was founded, especially in the way of collecting local history.

The *Astorian*, the successor to Astoria's first newspaper, *The Marine Gazette*, published during the sixties, was first published in 1873, and has been issued continuously since that time. Its influence in the upbuilding of the town can not be estimated. The early files of the paper are filled with articles encouraging new enterprises, setting forth the advantages of the town, and recording every new step in its advancement.

The question of title to the water frontage became a troublesome one when the town began to grow and buildings were being erected along the waterfront. The original settlers thought they had title to this land by virtue of their patent from the United States; but later it was

learned that the State of Oregon had title to all land between high and low-water mark. By a legislative act passed in 1872 the State authorized the sale of its property in front of Astoria to the owners of the property immediately back of the tide land, or to those who had purchased their land from such owners and had made improvements thereon. The price asked was nominal. During the years 1873-76 most of this land was purchased from the State, and the city placed in a position to use the property best suited for cannery sites and wharves.

By the terms of the new city charter, passed in 1876, the limits of the city were extended so as to include Shively's claim, Hustler and Aiken's Addition, and all of McClure and Olney's Addition. In 1891 the boundaries were again changed so as to include Upper Astoria, Alderbrook, all the land between Alderbrook and John Day's River, and Smith's Point. The city was bounded at this time by the Columbia River, John Day's River, Young's Bay and River, and a line connecting John Day's River and Young's River. These boundaries remained until 1899, when all the land east of Van Dusen's Addition was cut off from the city.

In the fall of 1874 the first grain ships to take their entire cargo from Astoria were loaded by R. C. Kinney & Sons. This fleet consisted of the British ship Vermont and three other vessels. The same year the Astoria and Willamette Barge Company was formed for the purpose of carrying wheat in barges and steamers from the farms in the Willamette Valley to the vessels at Astoria. The company built the "Farmer's Wharf" on the site of the present dock and warehouse of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company. This company lacked the capital to carry on this enterprise and after loading a few ships sold out to the Oregon Steam Navigation Company. The promoters of the barge company expected to transport a

ship load of wheat to Astoria for less than the cost of towage and pilotage between Portland and Astoria. Since this time some of the larger grain vessels have completed their cargoes here, but this port has not been made a starting point for the grain fleet.

While the experiment with the wheat shipping was being tried another industry was rising into importance, the one that more than any other has contributed to the growth of the town. In 1866 four thousand cases of salmon had been packed. The following year eighteen thousand cases were packed on the Columbia River, and this important industry was established and by 1874 it had reached the proportions of an extensive commercial transaction. Astoria's share in the salmon packing business began with the erection of Badollet & Company's cannery in Upper Astoria in 1873. This cannery did not run the next season. A. Booth & Company built the second Astoria cannery. Devlin & Nygant's, R. D. Hume & Company's, and Kinney's were built in the order named and all were in operation in 1876. Trullinger's mill was built during this year and Astoria now boasted of two large mills, five canneries, and a tannery. During the two years, from 1874 to 1876, the population of the town nearly doubled and many new buildings, consisting of canneries, warehouses, and dwellings, were erected. There was much money in circulation as every one had money and the fishermen were prodigal with theirs. Small change was seldom used, the quarter being the smallest coin in general use. This was the period of Astoria's greatest growth. From a small shipping station in the sixties it had grown to be a town of about two thousand people, controlling the most important industry on the lower Columbia and holding a large trade. Improvements followed as a matter of course. In 1876 the Western Union Telegraph Company completed its

line between Portland and Astoria, and Robert Mason & Company constructed a building and entered into the production of oil from salmon heads. During this year a new enterprise was started at the canneries of M. J. Kinney and Hanthorn & Company, that of canning beef and mutton. At Kinney's from September, 1876, to January, 1877, nineteen thousand five hundred cases of beef and five hundred cases of mutton were packed. This industry seems never to have gotten beyond the experimental stage in Astoria, owing largely to the difficulty of securing cattle at a fair price and to the lack of facilities for and experience in handling the meat. During the season of 1877 there were eleven canneries in operation in Astoria and more than a thousand fishing boats were in use on the river. Just before sundown, during the fishing season, the river would be covered with white sailed boats, all sailing briskly along on their way to their favorite drifts.

Houses during this year were in great demand, and many were built. The *Astorian* thus speaks of the building boom :

It may seem surprising, but nevertheless it is true, work is progressing in all stages upon one hundred and eighty-nine new buildings in the city of Astoria at this moment. * * Were we to attempt to enumerate the long list of structures erected in this city since last fall we should fail to do the subject justice. In building wharves and warehouses, canneries, and other packing establishments, ship yards, and machine shops, stores, and residences, many thousands of dollars have been spent.

And again :

Houses are being erected at an alarming rate. Last Saturday ten new structures were raised — one for every working hour of the day.

The river trade, a very important factor in the upbuilding of the city, had greatly increased during the past three years. Twenty or more steamers, large and small,

were engaged during 1878 in making daily trips between Astoria and lower river points and upper river points as far as Portland. At this time seven steamers were making regular trips between Portland and San Francisco, but stopping at Astoria and bringing many passengers and much freight to the town. The *Astorian* of May 5, 1877, commenting on the number of people arriving at Astoria, says "last month two thousand six hundred and twenty-eight bona fide immigrants landed at Astoria by steamers. About one thousand seven hundred proceeded inland in search of homes." This was about the beginning of the fishing season, and no doubt most of those who remained at Astoria were fishermen and cannery workers. The people at that time remained in Astoria during the fishing season, and returned to California for the winter.

The effect of having such a large floating population was soon felt on the morals of the city, and it was during these early years of the salmon industry that Astoria acquired the reputation for vice and crime that remained long after the city had rid itself of its undesirable element. During the year 1877 there were forty saloons in the city, and all reaped a rich harvest during the fishing season. The *Astorian* was strong in its protests against the immorality of the town, and urged the closing of all the dives and gambling houses, but for a time without avail. Later we shall see how the city did rid itself of its lowest class of inhabitants.

In 1878 the roadway to Upper Astoria was completed, and the Upper Astoria post office abolished. The completion of the roadway was an event of great importance to the people of both towns, and had the effect of putting an end to the rivalry that had existed since the starting of Upper Astoria in 1849, when the customhouse was built. The towns were now in fact one, though considered

locally as two separate towns. By the legislative act of 1891 the corporate limits of the town were extended so as to include upper town.

The intense rivalry between the companies operating steamers on the Portland-San Francisco route brought about the reduction of freight and passenger rates so that there was much travel between Oregon and California. As every steamer stopped several hours at Astoria the town received considerable patronage from the passengers. The *Astorian* speaks of the town being crowded during the stay of one of the ocean steamers. The Great Republic frequently carried a thousand passengers, and always took on a considerable part of its cargo at Astoria.

The population of Astoria in 1880 was two thousand eight hundred and three and the population of Clatsop County seven thousand two hundred and twenty-two. This increase in the number of people in the county meant much to Astoria, since the supplies for a large part of Clatsop County are taken from the city.

In 1883 the salmon industry reached its highest point. Not only were more fish canned than at any previous year but a better price than ever before was paid for the raw material, thus distributing a larger amount of money among the fishermen and cannery workers. During this season six hundred and twenty-nine thousand cases of salmon, valued at over \$3,000,000, were packed on the Columbia River.

It was during this year that the fire, known locally as the "big fire," occurred. It started July 2, 1883, in the sawmill near the site now occupied by the Foard & Stokes Company and swept the entire water front from that point east to Seventeenth Street, including the large warehouse owned by the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company. The volunteer fire department worked heroically and succeeded after several hours in gaining con-

trol of the fire, though not until it had destroyed several blocks of business houses, wharves, and dwellings. The wooden streets, built on piling over the water acted as a means for carrying the fire from building to building. The loss was very heavy but the fishing season was at its height and money plentiful, so that in a short time new buildings were erected in place of those destroyed by fire.

An interesting chapter in Astoria's history is connected with the fire of 1883. During its progress a large quantity of liquor was taken from the saloons in the path of the fire and carried to places of safety only to be stolen by the rougher class of onlookers. In a short time great disorder prevailed in the vicinity of the fire and the officers were powerless to prevent the wholesale stealing of the goods taken from the stores and houses. Drinking was kept up throughout the night but after the fire was checked the scene of disorder was transferred to the lower part of town, known as "Swilltown." Here the drunken fishermen were soon relieved of their money by the denizens of this section. Later some of the fishermen threatened to burn the rest of the town in retaliation. The business men of the city fearing that this threat would be carried out organized a committee to assist the officers in preserving the peace should their aid become necessary, the mayor at the same time issuing a proclamation calling upon all saloon keepers to close their saloons each night at 12 o'clock. One saloon, owned by Riley and Ginder, two ex-policemen, refused to obey and when the officers went to arrest the proprietors they were fired upon through the barricaded doors. During the conflict three taps were sounded on the fire bell, the signal for the citizens' committee to assemble. The committee responded quickly and arrived upon the scene fully armed and ready for action. The officers in the mean time had succeeded in entering the building and had arrested Riley

and Ginder who were brought before the committee. After a short deliberation they were informed that they must leave the city at once under penalty of being hanged from the city hall. The threat was sufficient and they closed their saloon and left the city. To one who knows the condition of affairs that existed in the city after the fire, and the character of the men who led the citizens' movement, it is evident that Riley and Ginder used the best of judgment in obeying promptly. After disposing of this case the committee decided to drive out the crowd of disreputable characters that lived in "Swilltown," and accordingly served notice on all such to leave town within twenty-four hours. This order, backed by a resolute set of citizens, was generally obeyed, only one man openly defying the committee. This man, an Englishman by the name of Boyle, was known as a "bad man." Nevertheless he was captured, whipped, and sent out of town. Recognizing three members of the committee he brought suit against them in the United States court for damages and secured the verdict. The amount was quickly raised by general subscription, \$20 being the usual individual contribution. The citizens' committee having accomplished the purpose for which it was organized now disbanded.

Notwithstanding the steady decline in the salmon pack on the Columbia River since 1883 and the closing of many of the canneries in the city, Astoria has had a steady growth, due in a great measure to the increase in trade with the growing towns and the farming and dairy districts tributary to the city, and to the growth of the saw-mill industry, which though still in its infancy here, is growing rapidly. By the close of the summer four and possibly five large mills will be in operation.

In 1890 the city had a population of six thousand one hundred and eighty-four, a very great increase over the

census returns of ten years before. Two years before this the Astoria and South Coast Railroad was started and the road built from Sea Side to the middle of Young's Bay, a distance of about fifteen miles. Though this road did not enter the city for several years its building had a marked effect on Astoria. Prices for city property increased very rapidly, and during the years 1889 and 1890 a real estate boom was in progress. While considerable property changed ownership very little building was done so that when the period of activity in real estate ended the city did not contain rows of empty houses as did so many of the boom towns of Washington.

Almost from the beginning of its history Astoria has dreamed of rail connections with the East. The coming of the railroad has been regarded as the one thing needed to make Astoria the seaport of the Northwest. The Astoria and South Coast road had stopped near the center of Young's Bay. About three years later a new road that was to run up Young's River, thence through the Nehalem Valley to Portland was started. This company, after building several miles of trestle around Smith's Point and up Young's River, suspended operations owing to its inability to secure sufficient financial backing to complete the road. The Astoria and Columbia River Railroad Company was given subsidy of a million and a half in money and property and in 1898 built the present road to connect with the Northern Pacific track at Goble. The city has been greatly benefited by this road, although the long expected period of rapid growth did not accompany it, owing to the fact that Astoria has not been made a common point with other cities of the Northwest.

The population of the city in 1900 had increased to eight thousand three hundred and eighty-one. A conservative estimate places the population now at a little over ten thousand.

This is substantially the story of Astoria's settlement and growth, both in wealth and population. It remains now to trace the influence of its main industry, salmon packing, in determining its social conditions. In Astoria foreigners and native born of foreign parentage form the great majority of inhabitants. Representatives from almost every part of the world live in Astoria, the principal nationalities, however, being Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, and Finns. The Finns form a greater part of our population than any other nationality.

During the first thirty years after the real growth of the city began the population was almost exclusively American, but with the advent of the fishing industry came the hardy fishermen and sailors of northwestern Europe who found here an opportunity to carry on their customary avocations with the assurance of profitable returns for their labors. During the first few years of the salmon business a great number of fishermen came from other states, so that Astoria had a floating population of nearly two thousand during the summer months. They were a free and easy set who made money and spent it without reserve, the saloons getting a large share of their earnings. As a result saloons flourished, carrying with them their many kindred evils, and Astoria became a rough place. The foreigners who in more recent years have engaged in fishing are, as a class, sober and industrious, and home builders. Gradually these adopted citizens have displaced the transient fishermen, until now the term fisherman is no longer synonymous with rowdy, but rather indicate a hardy, industrious citizen of foreign birth. In Upper Astoria and Alderbrook the people are mostly Scandinavians, or descendants of this race. In Union or Finn town, as the name implies, the people are almost exclusively Finns. They are progressive and almost to a man own their own homes, not shacks

or hovels, but well built, roomy houses. These people, as well as the Scandinavians, come from a country where the public school system is well established, and are zealous in the cause of the public schools of this city. A year ago the people of Union town attended the annual school meeting almost in a body, and succeeded in carrying through a measure and voting a tax for the construction of a school building in the west end of the city, at the same time offering to donate a considerable part of the necessary labor. The present Taylor school building is the result of these efforts.

In the last city election, out of a total of eleven hundred names registered, nearly six hundred were of foreign birth. Of this number one hundred and seventy were natives of Finland, eighty-seven of Sweden, seventy-two of Norway, sixty-four of Germany, and forty of Denmark. The Finns are very clannish, which accounts for their almost exclusive Finnish settlement in West Astoria. It is their custom to send for their relatives in their own country as soon as they have earned the necessary money. In this way the foreign born population is steadily increasing. They do not appear to be a speculative class, but seem content to work hard, secure a home and save something from their yearly earnings though a few co-operative companies have been formed for the purpose of packing salmon.

The struggle for material advancement in the way of developing resources, securing a railroad, and other enterprises has not been greatly aided by the foreign population. Since the coming of these foreign-born citizens the fishing element is no longer regarded as a rough class of people, but rather as the sober, working class of the city. During the winter months most of the fishermen are employed carpentering, street building, as workers

in the mills and factories or engaged in knitting nets and preparing gear for the next season.

Astoria at the present day is a cosmopolitan city of about ten thousand inhabitants, composed largely of foreigners. As in earlier times fishing is the main industry, though the rapidly growing lumber industry bids fair soon to surpass it in importance. At the present time there are only seven canneries in operation in Astoria, but the cold storage business has assumed large proportions during the past two years. Astoria now possesses an excellent water system, a thorough school system, consisting of six grammar schools and a high school, all together accommodating about fifteen hundred children and employing thirty-one teachers. Trade with the surrounding country has increased very rapidly during the last few years, but Astoria has been but little benefited by the increased export trade from the Columbia as most of the cargoes are shipped direct from Portland. During the ninety-two years of its existence Astoria has grown from a small fur-trading station to the second city in size in the State. While its growth has been apparently slow, it has kept pace with the development of Oregon and the Northwest as a whole.

ALFRED A. CLEVELAND.